

July 30, 1998

**AMERICAN VETERANS MEDICAL AIRLIFT SERVICE (AVMAS)**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy for the use of special air transportation services to eligible beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

**2. POLICY:** VHA Headquarters has authorized the establishment of a Voluntary Air Transport Service Program at interested VHA field facilities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for provision of air transportation services has been agreed upon by the National 210 Owners Association (N210OA), a Class 501 (C)(3) California non-profit Association, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and VHA.

**3. ACTION:** Facility Directors who plan to utilize this air transportation service must publish a local policy and procedure to use the service. A policy memo shall be issued at each VA medical center concerning the procedure for coordinating this program. ***NOTE:** A copy of that MOU is attached to this Directive, and the facility staff should use parts of that MOU in the formation of its local policy memo.* At a minimum, those VHA field facilities that decide to utilize the service shall include the following in the memo:

a. The VA medical center Director, or designee, shall identify appropriate staff who shall be responsible for determining to the extent possible whether a patient's physical and mental condition will allow him to be transported safely; whether an attendant is needed; and the types of specialized medical treatment support needed, such as: intravenous (IVs), oxygen, and stretchers.

b. The Chief of Staff, or designee, at the treating VA medical center shall be responsible for requesting the N210OA's air travel service. Where two VA medical centers are involved in a transfer of a patient, the Chief of Staff, or designee, at the "Host" (transferring) facility will be responsible for arranging for air travel services, including ground support, and appropriate records for acceptance and treatment at the receiving facility.

c. A statement about having an appropriate healthcare provider in attendance when determined necessary by the primary healthcare provider.

d. A process and point of contact to ensure that the pilot presents a valid pilot license, proof of insurance coverage (see Att. A) and is appointed as a Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteer before authorizing that pilot to undertake a flight to transport a patient.

**THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES JULY 30, 2003**

e. A process and point of contact to ensure that arrangements for ground transportation have been made through the DAV Transportation Network (TN) Coordinator for transport of the

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patient and other authorized passengers from the patient's home to the airport and back, and from the airport to the VA medical center, and back (see Att. A).

**4. REFERENCE**

- a. AVMAS MOU.
- b. VHA Handbook 1620.1.

**5. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), is responsible for the contents of this Directive.

**6. RECISSIONS:** This VHA Directive expires July 30, 2003.

S/ by Thomas Garthwaite, M.D. for  
Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.  
Under Secretary for Health

Attachment

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ATTACHMENT A

**A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) AGREED UPON BY THE  
NATIONAL 210 OWNERS ASSOCIATION (N210OA), THE DISABLED AMERICAN  
VETERANS (DAV) AND THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA)  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish the responsibilities of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Headquarters, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420; the National 210 Owners Association (N210OA), a Class 501 (C)(3) California Non-Profit Corporation, P.O. Box 1065, La Canada Flintridge, CA 91012; and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), National Service and Legislative Headquarters, 807 Maine Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20024, for the provision of special air transportation services to eligible beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

2. **Responsibilities of the National 210 Owners Association, Inc. (through its division, the American Veterans' Medical Airlift Service (AVMAS)) are to:**

a. Recruit Pilots that meet the following requirements; each will have:

(1) Possession of valid pilot's certification, including medical certificates.

(2) An appointment Without Compensation (WOC) as a Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteer at the appropriate VA medical center (see subpar. 4b).

(3) Certification by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) in Cessna 210 aircraft operation.

b. Ensure the maintenance of the pilot's appointment and certifications on a continuing basis.

c. Provide Cessna 210 aircraft for this service or an equivalent type of aircraft.

d. Provide maintenance of aircraft and any other air transport equipment.

e. Inform pilots of need for insurance. Each pilot shall provide proof of insurance with liability coverage of at least \$1,000,000 (smooth) per occurrence. The Federal Government shall be named as an additional insured under each policy, and the pilot shall provide the responsible VA medical center with certificates evidencing such coverage prior to, and as a condition of, serving as a VA WOC employee. Such certificates shall also evidence the agreement of the insurance company that the policies of insurance will not be canceled or modified without at least 10 days' prior written notice to the Under Secretary for Health, or designee.

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f. Supply liability coverage for N210OA at a minimum of \$1,000,000 (smooth) per occurrence. Proof of such insurance coverage shall be furnished to the VHA Director, Voluntary Service Office prior to commencement of services and annually thereafter.

g. Arrange for air transport services, if possible, for VA patients and others authorized to accompany them, when contacted by a VA medical center Chief of Staff, or designee.

h. Pay all additional costs of any flights including fuel and airport fees or ensure that individuals or entities other than VA, DAV, or veteran patients pay these costs.

i. Have the Federal Aviation Administration concur with this MOU for acceptability.

### **3. Responsibilities of DAV are to:**

Assist VA in providing ground transport, in support of the air transportation of patients under this agreement between VA, DAV and the National 210 Owners Association, Inc. The DAV Transportation Network (TN), based at VA medical center(s), will, to the maximum extent possible, provide any necessary surface transport of patients and other authorized passengers from patients' homes to the airport and back, and from the airport to VA medical center(s), and back.

### **4. Responsibilities of VA are as follows:**

a. Request air transport services. VA medical centers may request N210OA, (if available), to furnish (on an as needed and as requested basis) air transport services for eligible VA inpatients and/or outpatients either from airports near the patient's home to airports near the VA medical center or from airports near the VA medical center to airports near the patient's home (or roundtrip, if requested by a VA medical center). Should a patient require accompaniment by the patients family member(s), VA medical center employee(s) on official duty, or others, the Chief of Staff, or designee, will contact N210OA and authorize additional passengers. The air transport service will be fully supported to the maximum extent possible, with ground transportation as noted in paragraph 3. The Chief of Staff, or designee, shall ensure that a pilot has proof of insurance coverage and is appointed as a VAVS RS volunteer before authorizing that pilot to undertake a flight under this agreement.

b. Issue policy for proper procedure. The Chief of Staff, or designee, at the treating VA medical center shall be responsible for requesting the N210OA's air travel service. Where two VA medical center(s) are involved in a transfer of a patient, the Chief of Staff, or designee, at the "Host" (transferring) facility will be responsible for arranging for air travel services, including ground support, and appropriate records for acceptance and treatment by the receiving facility. A policy memo shall be issued at each VA medical center concerning the procedure for coordinating this program.

5. **Flights:** The parties agree that only flights which can be completed during daylight hours and in good weather will be undertaken.

6. **Authority.** VA has authority to enter into this agreement under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sections 111(h), 513, and 7301(b)
7. **Terms of Agreement:** This agreement shall be effective from the date of the last signature until terminated in accordance with paragraph 8.
8. **Termination:** Any party may terminate this MOU by providing written notice to the other parties 10 days in advance of the termination date.

National 210 Owners Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1065  
La Canada Flintridge, CA 92012

S/ 6/30/98

John M. Stratton  
Chairman and CEO

(Date)

Veterans Health Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

S/ 6/30/98

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.  
Under Secretary for Health

(Date)

Disabled American Veterans  
National Service and Legislative Headquarters  
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S/ 6/30/98

David W. Gorman  
Executive Director

(Date)